

GENERAL NOTES

Whooping Cranes at Shoal Lake, Manitoba.—On April 26, 1943, I saw nine white birds flying north over East Shoal Lake, Manitoba. They were about a mile away, flying low over the water. Their profiles were obscured by the far shoreline so that positive identification was impossible, but I was certain they were neither Whistling Swans nor White Pelicans, both of which are rather common here during spring migration.

Later in the morning I walked north up the lake shore to the rich hay meadow at the "narrows" where, as I mounted the rise from the shoreline, I saw nine Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) some 200 yards distant. Although only my head and shoulders were visible to the birds, they took alarm. In circular flight slower than that of the Sandhill Crane, they gained an altitude of about 300 feet, then struck due north. Without glasses I could not be certain of the number of adults and young birds in the band, but at least three were adults.

Shoal Lake has been my home since 1889. Up until the late nineties Whooping Cranes were not uncommon migrants through the Interlake region of Manitoba. Flocks of 20 and 30 were common, and as children we were told the white birds were Sandhills in full maturity. Tall and wary, they were difficult to approach, and I know of only one or two being shot in those early days. I saw these birds in small numbers each year up until 1924, except 1915, 1916, and 1917, when none passed through. Since 1924 I have seen them but twice, three in 1934 and the nine birds this year.—F. C. WARD, 1933 *William Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.*

Least Tern in southeastern Michigan.—High water in Lake Erie this year turned a field in Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan (10 miles north of Toledo), into an area of shallow pools and mud flats separated from the lake by a hundred yards of slightly higher ground. The shore of the region is largely marshy, with frequent narrow strips of sandy beach. At this field in July the common birds were Ring-billed Gulls, Bonaparte's Gulls, Forster's Terns, Common Terns, and Black Terns, along with occasional Herring Gulls and Caspian Terns.

On June 19, 1943, I saw what I believed to be a Least Tern in this field, but circumstances prevented my being certain of the identity. On July 10, Louis W. Campbell and I took a Least Tern there—an adult male of the Mississippi Valley race, *Sterna albifrons athalassos* (described by T. D. Burleigh and G. H. Lowery, Jr., in *La. State Univ. Mus. Zool. Occ. Paper No. 10*, 1942). There have been several published reports of the Least Tern in Michigan, but no evidence had been found to confirm the reports, and there was strong reason to suspect that the supposed Least Terns were actually immature Black Terns (see B. H. Swales, *Wils. Bull.*, 25, 1913:32-33). This appears to be the first specimen of Least Tern taken in Michigan, though Campbell collected two immature females nearby, on the Lake Erie shore in Lucas County, Ohio, on September 16, 1934.

I am indebted to George H. Lowery, Jr., for the identification of this specimen, which is now in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology.—HAROLD MAYFIELD, 3311 *Parkwood Avenue, Toledo, Ohio.*

The carpels of red spruce blossoms as food for birds.—During the past several years I have been paying particular attention to the belt of red spruce forest (*Picea rubens*) which clothes some of the higher mountain peaks in West Virginia, particularly with reference to the presence of crossbills and other northern finches in this forest. I have visited certain areas at all seasons of the year and have found the blooming season of the spruces to be, by far, the best time to find these birds of northern association.